

## Message Text

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ORIGIN EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /055 R

DRAFTED BY EA/VN:LPETERS/RHWENZEL:AOA

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EA/P-A.ROSEN

S/PRS - MR. PERNICK(SUBS.)

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R 310052Z DEC 74

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY SAIGON

INFO DOD

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E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS:MASS VS

SUBJECT: PRESS BRIEFINGS ON VIET-NAM

REF: SAIGON 15687

1. THE FOLLOWING UPDATED GUIDANCE HAS BEEN PROVIDED TO THE DEPARTMENT'S SPOKESMAN FOR USE IN RESPONDING TO PRESS QUESTIONS ON THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIET-NAM.

2. BEGIN TEXT. QUESTION: DO YOU HAVE ANY COMMENT ON THE INCREASED LEVEL OF COMBAT IN SOUTH VIET-NAM?

ANSWER: AN ACCUMULATION OF INTELLIGENCE IN NOVEMBER POINTED TO A SUBSTANTIAL ESCALATION OF MILITARY ACTIVITY IN SOUTH VIET-NAM ON THE PART OF THE COMMUNIST FORCES IN THE CURRENT DRY SEASON (DECEMBER TO MAY). THIS HEIGHTENED MILITARY ACTION BY NORTH VIET-NAM -- IN CLEAR VIOLATION OF THE PARIS ACCORDS -- MATERIALIZED IN EARLY DECEMBER. COMBAT SURGED

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SHARPLY UPWARD AFTER DECEMBER 5, AND IT HAS SINCE BECOME

CLEAR THAT THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE ARE CONFRONTING A MAJOR AND WELL-PLANNED MILITARY EFFORT. INCIDENTS AND CASUALTIES HAVE HIT NEW HIGHS FOR THE POST-PARIS AGREEMENT PERIOD; IN MID-DECEMBER SAIGON'S LOSSES WERE COMPARABLE TO THE AVERAGE FOR 1972, WHICH WAS THE HIGHEST OF ANY YEAR DURING THE WAR.

COMMUNIST LOSSES WERE LIKEWISE UP, REPORTEDLY APPROACHING 1972 LEVELS.

THERE ARE NO INDICATIONS THAT THIS MILITARY PRESSURE BY HANOI WILL SLACK OFF IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE. THERE ARE NO INDICATIONS THAT THE COMMUNISTS ARE WILLING TO RESUME TALKS AND MOVE THE CONFLICT OFF THE BATTLEFIELD, DESPITE REPEATED PROPOSALS TO THAT EFFECT BY THE GOVERNMENT OF VIET-NAM. ON THE CONTRARY, HANOI HAS GIVEN EVERY SIGN THAT IT HAS CLOSED OFF FURTHER NEGOTIATIONS WITH SAIGON FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE.

DESPITE THIS SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN MILITARY PRESSURE SOUTH VIETNAMESE FORCES HAVE STOOD UP WELL. WE CONTINUE TO HAVE CONFIDENCE THAT THEY WILL BE ABLE TO TURN BACK THE COMMUNIST FORCES. BUT THEIR DOING SO DEPENDS ON THEIR CONTINUING TO RECEIVE ADEQUATE U.S. MATERIAL SUPPORT TO COUNTER THE CONTINUING AND SUBSTANTIAL RESOURCES THAT HANOI IS PUTTING INTO COMBAT IN THE SOUTH. END TEXT.

3. ALTHOUGH QUESTION NOT RAISED AT DEPARTMENT'S PRESS BRIEFINGS IN PAST FEW DAYS, FOREGOING HAS BEEN USED IN BACKGROUND DISCUSSIONS WITH CORRESPONDENTS COVERING DEPARTMENT. SISCO

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